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Letter dated 18 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, issued on 18 May 2000 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Fisseha **Yimer**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 18 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Statement by the Foreign Ministry

The expected Security Council resolution imposing an arms embargo on Ethiopia was adopted by the Council yesterday on 17 May 2000. Though ostensibly aimed also at the aggressor country, Eritrea, the intent and objective of the initiators of the resolution is obviously Ethiopia.

The United States and the United Kingdom, who had wanted even a far harsher punishment to be meted out on Ethiopia, did not succeed. As such, Security Council resolution 1298 (2000) is a defeat for the United States and the United Kingdom, and a victory for those on the Security Council who were determined to protect the credibility of the United Nations.

Let the whole world know that the Security Council had made a mockery of Ethiopia's appeal to the Security Council when Ethiopia became, over two years ago, a victim of aggression. A situation which constituted a crisis because of a clearly committed act of aggression by Eritrea was not seen by the Security Council even as a potential source of a threat to regional peace and security.

Now, when indications start to emerge that the aggressor might not be able to manage to succeed to continue refusing to reverse his aggression, the Security Council suddenly, after having been silent for two years, was led by the United States and the United Kingdom into determining the situation between Ethiopia and Eritrea, a threat to regional peace and security. A situation which was not deemed by the Council a threat to regional peace and security when the aggression was committed is now being redefined as such, thus serious enough to fall under chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

As a matter of principle, the people of Ethiopia condemn, with all their strength, this unjust and unfair resolution adopted by the Security Council. We call on Africa, and on the whole international community, to condemn this gross violation by the Council of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law, and the hypocrisy which is partly responsible for where we are today.

At the same time, the people of Ethiopia appreciate deeply the efforts of those countries on the Security Council who tried to do whatever was possible, under the circumstances, to restrain the two countries whose major objective was to punish Ethiopia for resisting the pressure to turn the other cheek for the aggressor.

Despite the efforts made by some on the Security Council to deter the Council from committing a grave mistake, the United States and the United Kingdom have succeeded, once again, to send a clear message to Africa. That message is that what Africa needs and deserves is not the rule of law and internationally accepted principles but rather the rule of the jungle.

Whatever the practical effects of the punishment which the United States and the United Kingdom meant to be meted out on Ethiopia, the symbolic message the two countries have conveyed to the Ethiopian people is clear. An independent country that stands for its rights and that insists on defending its sovereignty, even

when doing so is inexpedient to the powerful, is liable to be punished by the powerful in the harshest possible manner.

The United Nations has failed to stop the United States and the United Kingdom from committing — like its predecessor, the League of Nations — an injustice against the people of Ethiopia, which will be marked by our people as another day of infamy and shame. But our country and people will endure no matter what the challenges.

18 May 2000